Bilingualism Policy

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Declaration of Principle

The City of Ottawa recognizes both official languages as having the same rights, status and privileges.

To this end, the City of Ottawa must:

Language of Work

- Encourage employees to work in the official language of their choice;
- Provide appropriate language training;
- Provide assistance to employees who must or wish to write in French;
- Develop and organize training programs in both official languages.

Language of Service

- Take the necessary steps to provide at all times the appropriate number of bilingual employees within work units;
- By appointing employees meeting the language requirements of the unit where the vacancy occurs or by providing language training to new incumbents 1 .

Cultural Programs

- Ensure that cultural programs aimed at one official language group be developed by employees having full knowledge of the appropriate culture.

Complaints

- The Secretariat Services Branch (French Language Services Division) will follow up on citizens' complaints concerning services in both official languages.

Communication

2008-01253/

- That all documents published by the City of Ottawa or its agencies and intended for the public (internal and external), be published in both official languages.

I. General Policy

R.1 That the City of Ottawa reiterate the bilingual character of the City as well as equality of rights and privileges for both linguistic groups in light of services offered.

R.1.1 That the City reaffirm to the community and to its employees its commitment to bilingualism and that it develop a plan and measures for furthering its policy on bilingualism.

R.1.2 That the Department of Human Resources continue to use the report "Bilingualism Policy - Work Units" as a work instrument, and that appropriate guidelines be developed.

R.1.3 That the General Manager, Human Resources be responsible for the development of this action plan and related measures.

R.1.4 That the General Manager, Human Resources, be responsible for the development of regulations and guidelines and the implementation of linguistic policies affecting employees.

R.1.5 That the City Manager submit a report indicating the appropriate cost of carrying out the recommendations contained this policy.

R.1.6 That the City Manager, the General Managers, directors and managers all be accountable for the implementation of this action plan and related measures.

That each year, the General Manager of each department prepare an annual plan on official languages describing the accomplishments during the last twelve months, submit plans or goals for the next twelve months and that they be approved with or without amendments, by City Council and made public.

R.1.7 That the General Manager, Human Resources submit progress reports on the implementation of the bilingualism policy.

R.1.8 That the City of Ottawa inform the community of the availability of services.

R.1.9 That the City distribute to employees the information pertaining to the City's Policy on bilingualism and its provisions dealing with their

rights and obligations.

That the English and French languages be accepted as languages of work within the municipal administration.

R.1.9.1. That the City inform its employees of this section and that it encourage them to use both official languages in their work.

R.1.9.2 That employees who have the opportunity, and are able to do so, be encouraged to use French on the job.

R.1.10 That Francophone employees working in related fields at the City be strongly encouraged to meet on a formal basis to discuss programs that could result in better services to the population.

R.1.11 That each Department with whom the public has contact have a bilingual capacity in order to provide services in both official languages.

R.1.11.1 That an assessment of needs in this area be undertaken.

R.1.11.2 That the City actively promote its services in both official languages.

R.1.12 That City Council reiterate its wish to offer to both official language groups comparable services and programs in their mother tongue and take the necessary action to achieve this objective.

R.1.12.1 That the quality and level of services provided in French be equal to those in English.

R.1.13 That work instruments (circulars, books and texts required for performance of duties) be made available simultaneously in both official languages.

R.1.14 That the City of Ottawa lobby provincial authorities so that legal documents, regulations and legislation be available in French and that the French text be recognized as legal at the local level.

R.1.15 That the necessary action be taken to ensure that action taken by City Council in French is recognized officially in French.

R.1.16 That each of the employee associations and unions be consulted as detailed plans are developed for the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

R.1.17 That City Council clearly give the mandate to its delegates on the Police Services Board to present in the form of recommendations all

relevant aspects of the bilingualism policy adopted by City Council and to ensure that appropriate mechanisms of application are developed or implemented.

R.1.17.1 That annual performance appraisals include language objectives for employees occupying positions requiring a second language in order to evaluate progress in language training of employees who have been confirmed in their positions without first having met the language requirements of those positions.

R.1.17.2 That annual employee performance appraisals and departmental assessments reflect progress made in implementing the policy, and that quarterly and annual reports include statements on progress.

R.1.18 That policies respecting bilingual postings and publications apply to all purchase of service groups providing services directly to the public and to community asscciations and groups whose activities are funded by the City of Ottawa at a rate of more than 30%. Such groups are to provide a minimum of bilingual personnel at the activity site.

R.1.18.1 That a clause respecting the spirit of this section be included in agreements with associations receiving grants from the City of Ottawa and in contracts signed by the City where appropriate in accordance with the intent of this policy.

R.1.18.2 That adherence/compliance of this section be monitored.

R.1.19 That the City of Ottawa establish an Advisory Committee on French Language Services with a mandate to advise the municipal administration and Council with regard to the implementation of the Policy on bilingualism.

R.1.20 It is understood that these recommendations deal with the use of the two official languages. The City also recognizes the need of adapting its services to the needs of other language and cultural groups as the need arises and as the multi-cultural face of this community changes.

II. Language Training

R.2 That the City of Ottawa clearly identify funds spent on language training for elected representatives.

R.2.1 That the City of Ottawa advise all its employees of the opportunities

for language training.

R.2.2 That each year the municipal administration encourage its unilingual employees to acquire second language skills and advise them of available programs.

R.2.2.1 That the priority for language training be given to work units whose main functions involve:

i) communicating with the public;

ii) advising other employees;

iii) providing services essential to the effective operation of other Departments (administrative services, central registry, etc.).

R.2.2.2 That language training be given to intermediate and senior staff in order to ensure that the following goals are met:

i) service to the public in both official languages at all levels;

ii) the use of both official languages in the work place.

R.2.3 That the City offer each year to some employees who have attained level 3 in the second official language, the opportunity to take during their working hours courses given by the City of Ottawa or other public organizations.

R.2.4 That all employees who have reached levels 1 to 3 (proficiency levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced) in the second language be reimbursed any fees paid for courses taken after working hours and completed in any educational institution.

R.2.5 That the Organizational Effectiveness Branch provide assistance to employees who either want or need to use written French. (This will help make cost effective use of existing resources).

R.2.6 That concrete measures be developed to ensure that employees registered for language training and occupying positions having a bilingual requirement use their second language at work. (The Organizational Effectiveness Branch could elicit the cooperation of Francophones within the work units to support the training program by providing employees with opportunities to use their French or by providing work instruments in French).

R.2.7 That the City adopt specific language training policies and

procedures.

R.2.8 That the municipal administration look into ways of improving language skills of employees at level 3, i.e., time-off with partial day, personnel exchanges between cities of Montreal and Ottawa, etc.

R.2.9 That the City of Ottawa encourage meetings to be chaired by bilingual persons, so that civic employees be able to use the official language of their choice at internal meetings, and depending on the type of meeting, that interpretation services be provided.

III. Professional Training

R.3 That professional training and development programs necessary for employee competence on the job be available in both official languages (either through courses given by the City or through other organizations).

R.3.1 That courses could be given in both official languages or in either of them.

(It is assumed that over a number of years all successful courses of significance will be offered in both official languages).

R.3.2 That courses offered in French be equal in quality to those in English.

R.3.3 That employees be advised of the availability of these services and use of these services be encouraged.

R.3.4 That courses be provided in French even if registration is low to allow time for habits to change.

R.3.5 That employees be encouraged to take their career development training in their second official language.

R.3.6 That in the short term Francophones be encouraged to take courses in French.

R.3.7 R.3.7 That guidelines be devised concerning the use of these services.

IV. Work Units

R.4 That those units whose primary function is to deal directly with the public on a full-time basis, have a full complement of bilingual staff or at least that the majority be bilingual.

R.4.1 That each work unit at the City representing a separate and specific

service to the public and/or employees be able to communicate in both official languages at all times.

R.4.2 That this bilingual capacity in each work unit be available at all levels including management, administration officers and support staff.

R.4.2.1 That the City of Ottawa redistribute its human resources more adequately and inform the public of this.

R.4.2.2 That the availability of services be ensured by judicious distribution of bilingual human resources.

R.4.2.3 That use of services in both official languages be actively promoted.

R.4.2.4 That the media be used to inform the public.

R.4.2.5 (i) That all Executive and Senior Management Group positions be designated bilingual.

(ii) That the City Manager set a target to achieve a 50% rate of bilingualism among all incumbents of Executive and Senior Management Groups by January 1, 2004.

(iii) Current incumbents who could not achieve level 3 proficiency in oral interaction and reading at least three (3) years prior to their earliest possible retirement date at full pension would be excluded from calculations in the achievement of the 50% target.

R.4.3 That with respect to services delivered in neighborhood and interacting with the community (i.e., community centres, planning offices) staff language skills will match neighborhood language needs. Where one official language group predominates in a neighborhood, civic employees with ability in the dominant language will be employed. Where both official groups represent significant portions of a neighborhood population, bilingual staff will be employed.

R.4.4 That all positions with a wide range of activities related to cultural programs directed to either of the two cultural groups be staffed by employees of the respective cultural group.

R.4.4.1 That all work units with a wide range of activities related to cultural programs directed to either of the two cultural groups be sufficiently staffed by employees having full knowledge of the appropriate cultural group.

R.4.4.2 That young people and senior citizens be given priority in the delivery of services.

R.4.4.3 That special effort be made so that Francophones in the Fire Services Branch have the opportunity of working in French and so that the Francophone communities can receive services in French. This program is to be developed and implemented in close collaboration with the Fire Fighters Association and so as to maintain the safe operation of the service.

R.4.4.4 That firefighters work in the language of their choice but that each group always have at least one firefighter who can communicate in both official languages.

R.4.4.5 Since the safety of the public is a prime consideration, that City Council see that this section is put into effect as soon as possible.

R.4.4.6 That bilingual firefighters be assigned to strategically located fire stations.

R.4.4.7 Allowing for the different work shifts, that there always be a bilingual person on duty.

R.4.4.8 This section shall not apply to the volunteer firefighters component of the Fire Service.

V. Written Communication

R.5 That civic employee records be kept in the official language of their choice.

R.5.1 That employees be advised of this possibility.

R.5.2 That all documents published by the City or its agencies and addressed to the public appear in both official languages (instructions, regulations, municipal by-laws, etc.).

R.5.3 That publications be made available in both official languages simultaneously or in the language of the target group (i.e., schedule of courses in French).

R.5.4 That all written communication from the General Managers and Department of Human Resources to a number of employees and any other general circular be in both official languages.

R.5.4.1 That all other written communication may be in either

official language of the choice of the writer.

R.5.5 That supervisors' memos addressed to employees of both language groups be written in both official languages.

R.5.6 That these documents always be printed side by side or back to back, except in the cases of maps, plans, or similar documents which do not lend themselves to this type of printing.

R.5.7 That the agendas of City Council meetings and its committees be available in both official languages.

R.5.8 That the publicity relating to programs and services offered to the public always be in the language of the said program.

R.5.8.1 That those responsible for the programs and services ensure the accuracy of the information and coordinate its dissemination.

R.5.8.2 That the Secretariat Services Branch see to the application or coordination of this item by ensuring that advertised, and related information, actually exists.

R.5.9 That all signs on City property or that of its agencies be bilingual or make use of international symbols.

R.5.9.1 That signs be replaced as required.

VI. Staffing

R.6 Subject to R.6.3 below, it is to be made clear that the language requirements of various positions will be fulfilled by training of the present incumbent when the incumbent does not meet language requirements, and in no instance will employees be terminated or suffer reduction in salary or wages for not meeting job language requirements.

R.6.1 That the City ensure that prospective employees of both language groups enjoy the same job and career opportunities within the municipal administration and that it implement mechanisms to meet these objectives and that implementation of mechanisms be referred to employee associations for suggestions and report back to the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee.

R.6.2 That language capability be an integral part of any resource and career planning that the Corporation may adopt.

R.6.3 That the City make every effort to appoint bilingual people to all management positions and especially those of General Manager.

R.6.3.1 That

i) effective immediately, all external candidates considered for Level 1 to 3 management positions be bilingual. Any exceptions, after having undertaken a comprehensive recruitment effort, shall require Council approval.

ii) prior to December 31, 2009, all internal candidates who are not bilingual and who are promoted to Level 1 to 3 management positions be required to take second language training to meet the language requirements of the position.

iii) as of December 31, 2009, bilingualism be considered a prerequisite for any internal promotion to a designated bilingual position within Level 1 to 3 management groups. Any exceptions, after having undertaken a comprehensive recruitment effort, shall require Council approval.

iv) Internal candidates promoted to Level 1 to 3 management positions pursuant to paragraphs (ii) and (iii) who could not achieve level 3 proficiency in oral interaction and reading at least three (3) years prior to their earliest possible retirement date at full pension would be exempted from meeting the language requirements of the position.

R.6.4 That where in any of the work units recommended by the Senior Management Team and approved by Council there is a deficiency in the number of employees who meet the bilingual requirement of the unit, the deficiency is to be corrected in the following manner:

i) subject to R.6.6 below, by the appointment of a sufficient number of persons with a bilingual capability to vacancies that may arise from time to time in the work units, and

ii) by the provision of language training to a sufficient number of employees in the work unit.

R.6.5 That appointments involving employees recruited from outside the City, personnel be subject to the same conditions as applied in the case of appointments involving internal employees.

R.6.6 That where under R.6.4 i) a vacant position is to be filled in a work unit that has a deficiency in the number of employees who meet the bilingual requirement of the work unit, and application for the position is made by an employee who (i) has been in the continuous full-time employment of the former Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, or any of the former area municipalities, since before January 1, 2001, and (ii) does not have the required bilingual capacity:

i) the employee may be appointed to the position but on an acting basis for a period of not less than six months and not more than twelve months on the understanding that he/she will be provided with and will undertake the required language training;

ii) the employee's appointment to the position will be confirmed if, following six months of training, it is determine that the employee is able to become, and is making reasonable efforts to become, proficient in the second language; and

iii) the employee will revert to his/her former classification and salary whenever it is determined that he/she is not able to become, or is not making reasonable efforts to become proficient in the second language.

R.6.7 That the scheduling of the provision of language training to City employees with respect to R.6.4 ii) above be made in the context of the availability of language training facilities and the degree of priority assigned to the bilingual requirement of the work unit as recommended by the Senior Management Team and approved by Council.

R.6.8 That employees who have already become or subsequently become full-time continuous employees of the City of Ottawa on or after January 1, 2001, be informed that their career development with the City could well be related to their proficiency in both official languages, and that they be encouraged to acquire this proficiency.

R.6.9 That cultural programs aimed at one official language group be designed by employee(s) of that same cultural group.

R.6.9.1 That cultural programs aimed at one official language group be designed by employees having full knowledge of the appropriate culture.

R.6.9.2 That in this regard, civic departments, when filling a

vacancy in a work unit that provides cultural programs and reviewing the draft job description prepared by the Classification Unit of the Human Resources Department, will give particular attention to the need to identify the cultural component of the job and the required knowledge of the appropriate culture.

R.6.10 That Human Resources Department develop and administer a comprehensive set of tests to assess effectively the knowledge of both official languages of all candidates for positions designated bilingual and that only those having the required language skills be considered.

R.6.10.1 That all tests administered to determine candidates skills and competence be available in both official languages.

R.6.10.2 That candidates be advised that some tests are available in the language of their choice.

R.6.10.3 That a work plan and time frame be established for the translation of other tests.

R.6.11 That all selection boards set up in view of filling a bilingual position be composed of a bilingual staff to allow candidates to use the language of their choice.

R.6.11.1 That guidelines be established with respect to the composition of selection boards.

R.6.11.2 That candidates be advised of this policy.

R.6.12 That hiring and promotion of staff at the City of Ottawa shall continue to be according to the merit principle. Notwithstanding other provisions of this policy, decisions about the hiring and promotion of staff are, subject to any applicable collective agreement or contract of employment, based on the ability of the candidate to perform the duties of the position applied for and the suitability of the candidate for that position.

VII. Translation

R.7 That the City establish an adequate Translation and Revision Section.

R.7.1 That the Secretariat Services Branch (French Language Services Division) carry out an analysis and evaluation of these services on a regular basis.

R.7.2 That adequate human resources be made available to ensure a

reasonable turnaround time.

R.7.3 In order to ensure fast, quality service at a reasonable cost, that the use of freelance translators, revisors or interpreters be considered, and that a directory of such resources be compiled.

R.7.4 That the City of Ottawa set priorities and requirements with regards to translation.

R.7.5 That the City of Ottawa adopt a policy on the use of translation and interpretation services.

R.7.6 That a precise policy be established with respect to:

i) **general access to services (translation and interpretation);**

ii) general revision and revision of previously translated documents;

iii) standardization of terminology.

R.7.7 That use of these services be encouraged and that employees be informed of their existence and the policies governing their use.

R.7.8 That the City of Ottawa be selective in its use of translation and that the section concentrate on revision and editing of texts as the requirements for translation decrease.

VIII. Language of Supervision

R.8 The policy that civic employees be supervised in the official language of their choice be a long term objective to which the City move in a gradual, practical manner.

R.8.1 That services provided to staff (salary, counselling, etc.) be available in the official language of the employees.

IX. Complaints

R.9 That a follow-up procedure be established for handling complaints and for receiving comments and suggestions; and that the City make the general public aware of this procedure.

References

- Career Management Centre
- Staffing and Recruitment Policy
- Corporate Tool Kit

Legislated and Administrative Authorities

- City of Ottawa Act, Ontario, 1999
- French Language Services Act, Ontario, 1989
- City Council, May 9th, 2001
- City Council, February 27th, 2002
- City Council, November 27th , 2002

Key Word Search

- Bilingualism
- Francophone
- Professional training
- Work instruments
- Work units

Contact

For more information on this policy, contact: Manon Henrie-Cadieux Manager, French Language Services Division Secretariat Services Branch Corporate Services City of Ottawa 613-580-2424, extension 21453

[1] If a unilingual employee hired prior to January 1, 2001, from the former municipalities of the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, Ottawa, West Carleton, Goulbourn, Kanata, Rideau, Nepean, Osgoode, Gloucester, Cumberland, Vanier or Rockcliffe Park, applies for a position designated bilingual and is appointed to that position; the appointment will be for a period of not less than six months; the employee must however undergo language training.

The appointment will be confirmed if it is determined that the employee is able to become, and is making reasonable efforts to become, proficient in the second language; if not, the employee will revert to his/her former classification.

Employees hired after January 1, 2001 and outside candidates must meet the posted language requirements.

The career development of employees hired after January 1, 2001 could be related to their language skills.

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